6.1.12 Lesser Efforts - The Church Committee's History of US Intelligence (1976)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FdvCZmi56g (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FdvCZmi56g)

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THE EVOLUTION AND ORGANIZATION OF THE FEDERAL INTELLIGENCE FUNCTION: A BRIEF OVERVIEW
(1776-1975)

Final Report of the Select Committee to Study Governmental Operations with Respect to Intelligence Activities United States Senate

Book 6, Supplementary Reports on Intelligence Activities

Prepared for the Select Committee by Dr. Harold C. Relyea, Analyst in American National Government, Government and General Research Division, Congressional Research Service, Library of Congress in 1976.

Published by the Committee to "provide a comprehensive compilation of public, unclassified, sources of information on American intelligence activities, and includes a full bibliography."

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Introduction

I. Research Limitations
II. Intelligence Authority

PART ONE: The Small Beginnings (1776-1914)

I. Revolution and Intelligence
II. The New Nation
III. The Mission to Florida
IV. Mexican War
V. Civil War
VI. Allan Pinkerton
VII. William H. Seward
VIII. Lafayette Baker
IX. Grenville M. Dodge
X. Henry Beebee Carrington
XI. Signal Services
XII. Lesser Efforts
XIII. Secret Service
XIV. Armed Forces Intelligence
XV. Spanish-American War

XVI. Post War Developments

PART TWO: The Middle Years (1914-39)

I. Military Intelligence
II. Naval Intelligence
III. Bureau of Investigation
IV. American Protective League
V. Other Factors
VI. Red Scare
VII. American Black Chamber
VIII. Intelligence at Twilight

PART THREE: The National Security Colossus (1939-75)

I. Neutral America
II. Attack
III. Office of Strategic Services
IV. Air Intelligence
V. Military Intelligence
VI. Naval Intelligence
VII. Civilian Intelligence
VIII. Postwar Adjustment
IX. Atomic Energy Commission
X. National Security Council
XI. Central Intelligence Agency
XII. Defense Intelligence
XIII. State Department
XIV. President’s Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board
XV. Loyalty-Security
XVI. Watergate
XVII. Justice Department
XVIII. Treasury Department
XIX. Overview

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[Music] twelve lesser efforts the organization's created by Pinkerton Seward Baker Dodge Carrington Myer and stager were the major sophisticated intelligence structures of the Civil War experience within the Union forces for a while a bureau of military information was maintained in the War Department under Colonel George H Sharpe who maintained the unit from March of 1863 until the end of the war he held some investigative powers by virtue of his position as deputy provost marshal general and coordinated intelligence for General Grant during the final year of the war with a high degree of affect quote we run across a few other spy chiefs who had some contemporary fame in their own right and with whom records and memoirs often bring us face to face among them was Colonel William Truesdale actually a civilian like Pinkerton head of the police chief for General William s Rosencrantz both in the army of the Mississippi and the Department of the Cumberland Truesdale host of duties included the employment of Scouts and spies within and about the enemy's lines to furnish intelligence for the commanding general the men were carefully selected and most of them were well acquainted with the surrounding country and its inhabitants what in the Revolutionary days would have been styled a channel of intelligence was said to have been maintained to the extreme limits of the Southern Confederacy then there was major Henry B Smith general Lew Wallace's Chief of

Detectives in the middle Department 1864 through 1865 whom Wallace called a man of ability and zeal in that department whose headquarters were at Baltimore treason flourished and plots grew and counter espionage needed to be as it was

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counter espionage needed to be as it was under major Smith's Direction adroit and unremitting it was Smith who at Baltimore in March 1865 administered the oath of allegiance to Lewis Paine Lewis Thornton Powell later hanged as a party to the conspiracy to murder Lincoln he inserted in the parole a clause requiring pain to go north of Philadelphia and remain during the war but pain was one who honored paroles rather in the breach than in the observance in nineteen eleven Smith published between the lines a decidedly unusual volume presenting material from his wartime files and throwing new light on conditions in Maryland and Northern Virginia end quote another important intelligence element which should be noted but which attained no degree of organizational sophistication is the Scout Corps common to virtually every Union combat command the scouts were often an ad-hoc body of changing faces the most celebrated leader of these forces was Maj Harry young general Sheridan's chief of scouts quote scouting in the Civil War was something more than touring the no-man's land between opposing camps Young had authority to raise a command of a hundred men but the role never exceeded 60 and was usually nearer 40 the men were in Confederate uniforms more often than in their own carrying a Spencer carbine and two revolvers they were the aristocrats of the army much as the men of the air service were in the First World War each was allowed for picked mounts they lived in the best quarters to be had they were exempt from camp routine they were paid in gold according to the value of intelligence obtained or services rendered they might go in small details a few men at a time or they might sally

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a few men at a time or they might sally out in force on some major expedition they work to surprise and capture or if necessary kill the enemy's pickets and vedettes to harass enemy patrols to pounce upon guerrilla bands once Young and his little company stampeded a Cavalry Brigade and they were also to gather intelligence in any case they wore the enemy's uniform and sometimes other disguises within the enemy's lines in order to deceive therefore under military law if taken within or about the enemy's lines they were to be treated as spies and suffered death end quote those serving under general Fremont in this capacity during the spring and summer of 1862 were given the name Jesse Scouts in honor of the commander's wife Jesse Benton the name became commonly used by these daring riders after Fremont had departed the theater and was applied to any federal scout who wore the gray in the Virginia area before the Union forces were mustered out Harry Young was to see intelligence service in another field of operations quote after Lee had surrendered the Mexican frontier needed watching for the contest between the French invaders and the Liberals was still in progress therefore Sheridan was ordered to the Rio Grande with a Corps Colonel young he was by now brevet 'add lieutenant colonel went along taking with him four of his old command Sheridan admits that material aid was given the Liberals from United States Arsenal's and he also recommended young as a trusty go-between and an agent who could furnish reliable intelligence of affairs within Mexico itself but outwardly there was adherence to neutrality young however without first getting Sheridan's approval took liberal money raised a band of fifty or so and attempted to cross the river a fight ensued some were killed some

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fight ensued some were killed some escaped young himself disappearing completely end quote by the end of the Civil War all military intelligence operations virtually ceased to exist undoubtedly some scouts were retained for immediate observation duties in the West in the Indian campaigns beyond this the intelligence organizations created by the Union Armed Forces establishment was totally dismantled with the Peace of Appomattox and the demise in the opinion of at least one expert was not necessarily a loss to be boom owned quote from beginning to end of the Civil War the ordinary hazards of professional espionage were

doubled and trebled by the inexperienced or downright and comput of staff officers assigned to intelligence the transmitting of information was primitive and unsystematic where cypher messages were resorted to the ciphers were so transparently contrived they did a little more than guarantee the guilt of the bearer in addition while men and women fashioned for themselves a hair breath existence to penetrate the secrets of the enemy what they learned and communicated was too seldom interpreted effectively often spy reports were ignored until all their military value and timeliness had subsided into history end quote [Music] this is our hidden history you

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